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ABSTRACT

An instructional model to develop academic integrity (honesty) in college students is proposed. Goals are to develop: adherence to the principle of doing one's own work, an understanding for the principle and nature of coauthorship, an understanding and adherence to citation practices, and an understanding of plagiarism. Students should be administered a questionnaire to determine their perceptions of academic dishonesty before undertaking classroom instruction in a library skills course, which will incorporate principles of academic integrity with research skills. Classroom discussions and results of pre- and post-assessment using a questionnaire on academic integrity may be used to emphasize six areas of qualitative change adapted from Kohlberg's model of moral development. The stages illustrate movement from behavior motivated by a desire to avoid punishment to behavior motivated by self-chosen ethical principles. The stages involve the following orientations: punishment-and-obedience, instrumental-relativist, interpersonal concordance or "good boy-nice girl," law and order, social contract/legalistic, and universal, ethical principle. Information is provided on learning objectives, method, materials, assignments, and evaluation. (SW)

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TEACHING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: A COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL BASED ON KOHLBERG'S THEORY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

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HE019 367

Teaching Academic Integrity: A Cognitive Developmental Model Based on Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Lorna Peterson

Research on academic integrity in the college and university environment suggests that students are not fully cognizant as to what constitutes dishonesty in the academic setting (Uhlig & Howes, 1967; Barnett & Dalton, 1981; Brown, 1984). In a survey of twenty-five Library Instruction 160 students and three Library Instruction faculty members at Iowa State University regarding misrepresentation of an assignment, results indicate that 39% of the responding students (23) have a vague comprehension of misrepresentation and academic integrity, and would commit misrepresentation. Sixty-six percent of the faculty believe that students should know and be prepared to follow all aspects of academic integrity upon entering college. This suggests a discrepancy between faculty expectations and student knowledge.

Higher learning values the creation and communication of ideas. And inherent in this value is the respect for properly documenting, representing and expressing the intellectual content of an idea. Unfortunately too many of our undergraduates do not have a firm notion of, and respect for, the communication of ideas. This uncertainty may retard the development of academic integrity, and for higher education, this is a dangerous and self-defeating situation.

The Association of American Colleges, in their publication, Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community (1985), recommends the reappearance of values exploration and moral reasoning in the course content of our many subject disciplines. Humans cannot and do not act in suspended judgment. We must make real decisions, real choices and be prepared for the responsibility each decision brings. This preparation would entail a firm grasp of the "why" of one's behavior and an adherence to one's conscious (Association of American Colleges, 1985, pp. 21-22). And the literature of student development theory supports this need for values in our college curriculum. Specific to academic integrity, Arthur W. Chickering reminds us that the college experience is more than the acquisition of knowledge and the development of intellectual competence. Higher education promotes growth along several dimensions, including the development of integrity (Chickering, 1969). Student development practitioners and academicians recognize the development of academic integrity as crucial, and have studied the phenomenon of academic dishonesty in order to understand the incidence and motivation behind this type of unethical behavior. Attitudes toward academic dishonesty and the factors shaping the behavior have been documented (Brown, 1984; Hawley, 1984). Elizabeth M. Nuss compared faculty and student attitudes concerning academic dishonesty (Nuss, 1984). John P. Houston, intrigued by Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development postulated that moral instruction using Kohlberg's method of group discussions of moral dilemmas would heighten moral judgment and thus reduce academic dishonesty. This work suggests that moral judgment and moral behavior can be taught, and that instruction makes a significant impact on moral action (Houston, 1983).

It is obvious that faculty members need to take a much more active role in the fostering of academic integrity and independent scholarship in our students. To this end, the following instructional model is proposed.

Developmental Task: Develop academic integrity in college students.

Goals: Develop an adherence to the principle of doing one's own work. Develop an understanding for the principle and nature of co-authorship. Develop an understanding and adherence to citation practices. Develop an understanding of plagiarism.

Objectives: The student will connect the fundamental principles of learning, independent thinking, and critical thinking to the action of completing assignments on one's own. The student will understand that more than one person may be responsible for the intellectual content of a work and that only one work results. Therefore, the collaborators are listed as co-authors, joint authors, or principal and junior authors. The student will recognize that citation of information is a contribution to communication and illustrates the process in developing an idea. The student will recognize that citation of another's work serves as supporting data for an idea. The student will understand that plagiarism is stealing.

Assessment: Before treatment, administer a questionnaire to investigate student perceptions of academic dishonesty. Modify questionnaire from Brown, 1984. Analyze results.

Strategy: Classroom instruction in a library skills course. Instructor incorporates principles of academic integrity with research skills. **Method:** The mechanics of finding information is taught with the why and how of documenting information. This will be achieved through small group discussions and individual assignments. Also includes a mini-lecture on academic integrity. **Materials:** Readings on scholarship and research, some examples are The modern researcher by Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, 1957, and The Joys of research, editor Walter Shropshine, Jr., 1981. **Exercises:** Moral dilemmas describing misrepresentation, plagiarism, recycling papers and the adding of works not consulted to a bibliography. Role playing exercises (e.g. student and teacher roles in dealing with academic dishonesty). **Assignments:** Assign an annotated bibliography project. Project would consist of four citations on student subject choice with an abstract of each article cited.

Evaluation: Careful correction of annotated bibliography project. If errors are found in citation, have student find information again. Watch for duplicate assignments. Administer academic integrity questionnaire again. Analyze results. Group discussion on attitude changes or no changes. Student self-evaluation.

The results of the pre-and post-assessment questionnaire on academic integrity and the classroom discussions may be used to emphasize the following six areas of qualitative change adapted from Kohlberg's model of moral development. The six stages will illustrate movement from behavior which is motivated by a desire to avoid punishment (Stage I) to behavior which is motivated by self chosen ethical principles grounded in consistency, universality and following logical comprehensiveness (Smith, 1978).

Stage 1: Punishment-and-Obedience Orientation. This is where one is responsive to good/bad and right/wrong but only in terms of avoiding punishment or for gaining favors. The student would not misrepresent his/her work, purchase a term paper or recycle an old paper for fear of getting caught. This stage is best exemplified by an article appearing in College Woman which cautions against purchasing a term paper because "the biggest hazard is getting caught", or a low grade may result because the purchased paper isn't very good (Gross, 1986, p.48). The orientation is self-centered and interprets behavior in relation to the physical or the hedonistic consequences of action.

Stage 2: The Instrumental-Relativist Orientation describes an individual who views moral action as that which satisfies one's own needs and maybe the needs of others. For this student, getting an assignment turned in on time would please the instructor plus satisfy the student's need to meet a deadline. Such a student would work together with another student, turn in exact assignments and justify it with "working together is okay."

Stage 3: The Interpersonal Concordance or "Good Boy-Nice Girl" Orientation is an orientation towards approval seeking. The right action is that action which pleases or helps others. This student would probably aid another student by allowing the copying of one's work. Also, at this stage the concept of co-authorship is present so that if two people shared one assignment, this student in all likelihood would place two names on the assignment.

Stage 4: Law and Order Orientation is one where an individual is responsive to fixed rules and regulations. This student would follow the code of a university handbook because the code is written down. Also, this student would expect rules and guide-lines from his/her instructor. The only ethic to follow is the ethic of following a written code.

Stage 5: The Social Contract, Legalistic Orientation, Generally with Utilarian Overtones is a stage of awareness that most values and rules are relative to a group. These rules should be upheld because they are the social contract of the group. The student can recognize the complexities of the academic integrity issue and understand the view point of the teacher when faced with grading two exact papers. The "working together is okay" rational is not logical to this student because he/she can understand the concept that one idea by two people cannot masquerade as two distinct ideas by two individuals.

Stage 6: The Universal-Ethical-Principle Orientation is a behavior pattern which follows self-chosen ethical principles. Here the student understands that academic dishonesty is a breach of integrity. To commit misrepresentation is cheating. One would cheat oneself from the act of learning and thinking critically. The student understands that academic dishonesty is a violation of the values and principles of higher education. At this highest level, one could not misrepresent an assignment because misrepresentation is wrong.

It is possible that this program would not affect all students equally and in the direction towards academic integrity. But there is a responsibility of faculty to communicate our expectations and teach the value of independent scholarship. Most students would act appropriately in an academic setting if they had a moral reference point from which to behave.

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